

# The Canada Lancet

VOL. LIII

TORONTO, APRIL, 1920

No. 8

---

## EDITORIAL

---

### VACCINATION AND ANTIVACCINATION.

Quite recently we were favored with a reprint of the trial of a Dr. Carlo Ruata, of Perouse, Italy. The small pamphlet is being distributed in the interests of those opposed to vaccination. To those who are ignorant of medical literature and science, the statements of Dr. Ruata might carry some weight. Quite recently the people of Toronto and Ontario were deluged with similar arguments.

In the first place Dr. Ruata was tried before a magistrate. In his own defence he submitted many statements in justification for his stand against the law demanding vaccination. It is well to note that these statements were not challenged at the trial by competent expert medical evidence.

In the hurried glance we have been able to give to this pamphlet, which is in French, we have detected a number of statements that could be disputed. There is given a resolution passed at a meeting of the Academy of Medicine of Perouse, condemning vaccination. Before that could be admitted as having any weight one would have to know who were present, how many, and the circumstances under which the meeting of the academy was held. It is an easy matter to get a snatch opinion.

The magistrate acquitted Dr. Ruata, and praises his defence; but here, again, one must know what were the qualifications of the magistrate to weigh Dr. Ruata's arguments, and come to a sound conclusion as to their accuracy or otherwise. The words of the magistrate might be of no value if one knew all the facts.

Let us quote one sentence: "The triangular base on which vaccination has been reared with the hysterical woman of Constantinople, the milkmaid of Berkley, and the empirical Jenner. The medical men and the men of science were not invited to deliberate on the case." Such a statement may mislead the ignorant, but it will find no place in the minds of those who know the history of vaccination.